

Workforce & Education Programme

End of Strategy Report
2023 - 2025



Summary of key achievements



£1,046,250

Workforce development monies generated

97

ACCEND Mentors recruited

6

Cancer workforce away days delivered

5,000

Learners completing CPD

5,927

Academy users

262,000

Cancer Academy website views

130,000

CPD hours accumulated

1,330

Completed Modules

£963,670

Generated for education investment

96

Additional pre-reg learners accessing cancer placements

534

Pre-Reg learners engaged

122

Blended learning offers created

1st

Communication Skills AI offer

3

Awards
(GMCC, Health and Care Champions, Macmillan)

1,027

Educational logs on ePortfolio

25

New roles piloted

7,200

Hours completed on cancer placements

Introduction

Demand for cancer services increases year on year with growth of the cancer workforce not keeping pace with increasing demand. The Greater Manchester (GM) Cancer Alliance Workforce and Education Programme developed the 2023 - 25 Cancer Workforce & Education Strategy to address this challenge. The strategy was aligned to the NHS Greater Manchester People and Culture strategy and NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.

The GM Cancer Workforce and Education Strategy was not taken in isolation, but delivered in alignment with other regional strategies / networks including the GM Cancer Digital and Innovation strategy, Tackling Health Inequalities programme, the Imaging, Pathology and Diagnostics Networks, and Radiotherapy, Teenage and Young Adults, and Children's Cancer Operational Delivery Networks.

This report provides an end of strategy round up of activity delivered alongside system stakeholders and the valued contributions of the cancer workforce.

Our Strategy

Pillars

(in alignment with the People and Culture strategy)

Click on each pillar below to see our delivered activity

**Workforce
Integration**



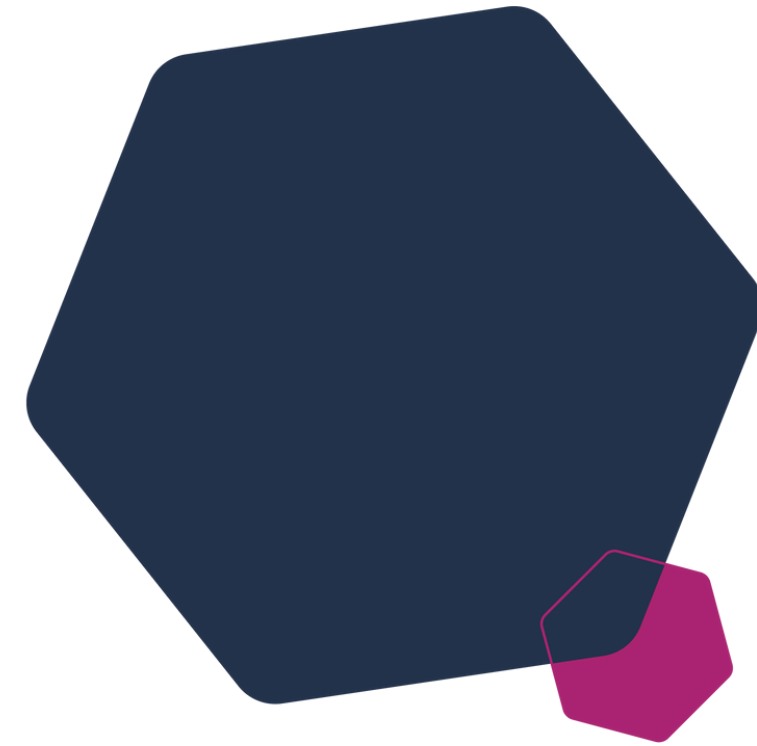
**Workforce
Wellbeing**



**Growing and
Developing**



**Addressing
Inequalities**



Workforce Integration



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
<p>Explore digital solutions to enable greater connectivity across the system to provide communities of practice, promote peer to peer support / sharing of best practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As part of the Primary Care Cancer Fellowship programme a Nurse fellow was recruited to explore and pilot a digital solution to improve communications across Primary and secondary care nurses. This project continues into 25/26 and is utilising Microsoft Teams as a communications platform. This is currently being piloted in the Wigan locality.Three Community of Practices (CoP) have been developed to support better integration across organisations and professional groups to share best practice 1) Cancer AHPs; 2) to support implementation of ACCEND, and 3) for Cancer Support Workers (CSW).NHS futures is being utilised to build a community forum for Lead Cancer Nurses across GM.
<p>Provide a mutually beneficial model for cross system working bringing together generalist and specialist roles, including mentoring and coaching</p>	
<p>Explore the role of a neighbourhood cancer lead in line with the People and Culture strategy to work within the community as part of health and wellbeing services</p>	<p>Conversations were held with the Strategic Lead for Population Health Management who shared the current model embedded within Local Care Organisations which featured as part of the ICB led 'Fairer Health for All' workstream. Given the existing infrastructure and successful model, the activity within the strategy was stood down as a deliverable.</p>
<p>Pilot and evaluate blended roles in cancer care, including blended clinical and operational roles</p>	<p>Two blended roles were piloted to support retention of mid-late career Nurses and Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) which consisted of part-time clinical and part-time service improvement activities, providing system-wide leadership opportunities:</p> <p>1) Cancer Education and Development Leads – 3 experienced cancer nurses were recruited to lead the implementation of ACCEND. To date they have been working with the non-medical workforce to raise awareness of ACCEND, led implementation workshops on how to use the framework, and developing standardised inductions and appraisals. This work will continue in 2025/26.</p> <p>2) AHP Advisors were recruited to deliver specific projects identified by AHPs. Outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishing a GM Cancer AHP CoP to bring together Cancer AHPs as a network, providing peer-to-peer support and opportunities for sharing best practice. These now run bi-monthly with good attendance.Project to address inequalities in access to Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) for head and neck cancer patients. A workforce data collection was conducted to collate total number of generalist and specialist SLTs across GM. Focus groups were also held with Specialist SLTs to do a deep dive into the key challenges, highlight opportunities for improvement and how changes could have an impact on provision across GM (phase 1). Findings have been shared with key stakeholders including the GM Chief AHP group, and Community Service Expert Reference group. Phase 2 to define a new pan-GM workforce model will be a core deliverable for 2025/26.
<p>Pilot Cancer fellowship programmes across primary and secondary care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Link in with the Primary Care GP and Nurse Fellowship programmes to support early diagnosis, education, and personalised care for cancer patients,Explore fellowship programmes for the medical workforce	<p>This initiative was delivered in collaboration with the GM Training Hub, providing primary care professionals with the opportunity of a portfolio career working with the Cancer Alliance to lead mutually beneficial quality improvement projects, expand their cancer knowledge and expertise, whilst providing the Cancer Alliance with valuable insights from Primary Care. The programme includes a suite of Fellows across disciplines aligned to a pathway board or programme. 3 GP Fellows completed their 12-month tenure with the following key outputs:</p> <p>i) development and implementation of standardised GM templates for Cancer Care Reviews to increase uptake and quality, ii) a review of the Clinical Decision Support Tool content and algorithms supported by a clinically focused toolkit, and iii) scoping exercise of primary care workforce communication skills training needs to inform future education.</p> <p>The Dental Fellow focused on surveying access to care, early identification, and management of head and neck cancer patients amongst general dental practitioners. The final report is due in the coming months and available on the GM Cancer website.</p> <p>Two GP fellows are now in a formalised GP advisor role at the alliance and the dental fellow continues to support the Early diagnosis programme. The Nurse and Pharmacy Fellows will continue in 25/26.</p> <p>A fellowship for the medical workforce will commence in 25/26 focusing on Specialty Trainees.</p>
<p>Explore innovative / integrated workforce solutions to support the delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Best Practice Timed Pathways (BTP) in order to achieve the Faster Diagnosis StandardSeamless personalised care for cancer patients	<p>The Colorectal BTP Workshop in 2023 identified an educational need to improve patient stepdown off a cancer pathway following endoscopy when cancer is excluded, particularly after an updated version of the step-down policy was introduced across both the Oesophago-gastric and Colorectal Pathway Boards. A webinar was delivered in June 2024, with 88 delegates in attendance and over 1,000 views of the on-demand recording to date. All delegates surveyed indicated that their confidence in identifying cancer had improved post-webinar, and their understanding of the policy was enhanced. The on-demand version can be viewed here. Additional education to complement the webinar is currently in progress so learners can test their knowledge on an interactive, case-based module</p> <p>See next section regarding a pilot to support personalised care provision for cancer patients by improving workforce integration.</p>

Workforce Integration



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
<p>Build on existing new roles that have been piloted, to expand to other professional groups or to scale and spread across the system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Physician Associates (PA) in CancerPrimary care extended roles / specialist interest in cancerCancer Care Coordinator (CCC) pilot in Primary Care Networks (PCNs)	<p>PA's</p> <p>After the success of the initial pilot for PAs in secondary care and feedback from the PAs involved, a blended role was piloted across primary and secondary care settings to gain experience in both areas and utilise specialist skills in a Primary Care setting thereby bringing care closer to home. In primary care, the PA managed both acute and chronic patient cases, and in secondary care, gained valuable experience through shadowing and performing procedures, such as flexible cystoscopies, and later gained more exposure to One Stop Clinics, enhancing consultation and patient management skills. The PA applied specialist skills to support the workforce in care homes, particularly in managing patients with catheter care. However, limited capacity within secondary care to facilitate specialist skill development restricted the PA's ability to bring a broader range of expertise to Primary Care. The PA role was not sustained due to financial pressures in the system and sensitivities around regulation.</p> <p>CCC's in Primary Care</p> <p>The CCC pilot was a flagship project for the Workforce and Education programme, funded by Health Education England, Macmillan, and the GM Workforce Collaborative, aimed at bridging the gap between Primary and Secondary care for cancer patients.</p> <p>Nine CCCs were recruited across 9 PCNs, where they significantly increased the number of Cancer Care Reviews (CCRs) completed, reduced variation in CCR quality, improved primary care workforce satisfaction, and achieved high patient satisfaction. Eight of the nine roles were sustained through the Additional Role Reimbursement scheme, and since the project's conclusion, the role has been scaled and expanded across several GM PCNs. A full project evaluation report is available here. The project was also awarded the Macmillan Professionals Quality Improvement Award in 2023 and the GM Cancer Collaboration Award in 2024.</p> <p>To complement the above, the GP Fellows worked to understand the quality of cancer care reviews and developed a set of standards. To support implementation, a webinar on 'Delivering High Quality Cancer Care Reviews' was produced. A recording of the webinar and evaluation paper can be found here.</p> <p>Primary Care Extended Roles</p> <p>GPs with Extended Roles (GPER) - there is now a breast GPER in every locality, which has supported the implementation of a mastalgia pathway within each breast service in Greater Manchester. Referrals for mastalgia made up approximately 20% of all referrals (cancer suspected and cancer not suspected) which has now reduced to below 4% in some areas due to this project and accompanying comprehensive Primary Care education programme. This project was led by the Cancer Alliance breast pathway board and in 25/26 we will be looking to expand this model to other pathways under a GPs with Cancer Roles programme (GPCRs).</p>
<p>Support the provision of integrated education available to all sectors through the Cancer Academy, including the development of bespoke early diagnosis development packages for all health and care staff</p>	<p>GM Health and Care academies network</p> <p>The Cancer Alliance has established an education network to align activity being delivered across all GM health and care academies to avoid duplication and make best use of resources. This group continues to meet bi-monthly to share best practice and identify collaborative opportunities.</p> <p>Skills labs are essential for addressing the need for technical skills development, helping to reduce practice variation and promote evidence-based care. By supporting workforce development, these labs not only enhance clinical effectiveness but also contribute to improved health outcomes, well-being, and job satisfaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Care Homes: With the support of the GM Training Hub and GM Social Care Academy, we have successfully operationalised skills labs for catheter care in social care settings. We have delivered catheterisation skills labs to five care homes across Greater Manchester, training 100 registered staff, with activities continuing into 25/26.Primary Care: The concept of skills labs has also been extended to primary care, with the rollout of a vaginal examination skills lab developed in collaboration with the Gynaecology Pathway Board. These hands-on sessions aim to enhance primary care professionals' ability to support earlier cancer diagnosis. A total of five sessions have been delivered to over 50 GPs, GP trainees, ACPs, and practice nurses across all localities. Continuous feedback has been collected, leading to the involvement of our EDI Educator, who has helped incorporate inclusive terminology. By partnering with the LGBT Foundation, we can now offer comprehensive, wrap-around training packages.
<p>Expand the Cancer Academy skills lab programme to support staff working across different sectors to support cancer patients including Social Care, and Mental Health Professionals</p>	
<p>Use the learning from global workforce initiatives to support better integration</p>	<p>Links have been made with the global team at NHSE, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Christie International and other ICBs with global functions to understand existing activity, and potential collaborative opportunities. Global work exploration will continue in 25/26.</p>

Workforce Integration



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Rollout non-medical referral training for Practice Nurses and other professional groups where appropriate	<p>Existing training was reviewed and streamlined to provide a more accessible training package for Nurses and AHPs within Primary Care to upskill them to become a non-medical referrer for chest x-rays with a view to speeding up the pathway for lung patients. Benefits include the workforce having the right skills at the right time to deliver the best patient care and a streamlined patient pathway with continuity of care and improved patient outcomes through early diagnosis.</p> <p>Feedback from one learner: “I have found this to be really useful and stops unnecessary GP appointments for those who need a CXR...results are returned quickly and they are able to continue with treatment plan”.</p> <p>An infographic was developed and socialised with all relevant networks. We engaged with the Radiology Service Managers who were supportive of wider role out of the successful pilot. This work continues through the Early Diagnosis Programme. View the infographic here.</p>
Promote the use / integration of the various digital solutions currently on offer to enable the cancer workforce to move around the system: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National NHSE Digital Staff Passport• Cancer Academy ePortfolio• Primary care and social care passports	<p>Digital Staff Passport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following on from the success of piloting the NHSE Covid-19 Digital Staff Passport in 2021/22, the National team stood the product down temporarily whilst developing an updated version which is to be introduced in a top-down approach across all ICBs in due course and so no further activity was pursued. <p>ePortfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ePortfolio has evolved through focus group engagement, transitioning from a digital version of the ACCEND framework to a comprehensive tool for logging capabilities.• Since going live with the ePortfolio in October 2023, site-specific variations of ACCEND were released for lung, urology, colorectal, breast, gynaecology, skin cancer and Acute Oncology.• There are over 700 active users across almost half of all Cancer Alliances - 450 of these from GM. 20% of users are based in Primary Care, highlighting the platform's versatility.• Plans to introduce team skill mix tracking and appraisal functionalities will progress in 25/26.• Ongoing conversations about expanding the platform to include other frameworks beyond cancer. <p>Passports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Packages of early diagnosis and primary care education resources were developed to align with the three levels of the Primary Care Passports to ensure the right cancer education is accessible for each specific role within primary care.• Discussions were initiated about the possibility of the ePortfolio interfacing with the Primary Care Passports to streamline access to training. This development is currently on hold due to a review of the Passports.
Driving Regional Workforce Strategies and Collaborations	<p>Over the course of 2024 we have supported the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the GM Endoscopy Strategy and Delivery Plan, working with the Endoscopy Network. The purpose of which is to create a sustainable workforce, focusing on agile working, enhancing digital advancements, improving working environments and ensuring career progression for all staff members.• the Northwest Radiotherapy Workforce Strategy and Implementation Plan by working in collaboration with the Radiotherapy Operational Delivery Network. This involved a regional workshop, which received fantastic engagement and a consultation phase ensuring it's fit for purpose and meets the needs of the workforce. <p>Work with ODNs expanded to include the North West Children's Cancer ODN. By chairing the Workforce and Education stream of the programme, the team played a pivotal role in the successful delivery of the first ever Children and Young People's Cancer Conference, reigniting engagement with this small but impactful workforce collective. This success has established the conference as an inaugural event, set to rotate across the North West Cancer Alliances. Currently, a workforce gap analysis and training needs assessment are underway, paving the way for even more exciting developments.</p>

Workforce Wellbeing



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Ensure equity in access to cancer education through the GM Cancer Academy	A culture of lifelong learning and equitable access to education has remained at the forefront of our efforts. Through the GM Cancer Academy, we continue to champion accessible education for all health and care staff, ensuring that no workforce segment is left behind. Our ambition to secure protected time for education and training remains a priority and through implementation of the national ACCEND framework we are starting to see increasing evidence of the workforce logging education via the ePortfolio .
Promote a lifelong learning culture through The GM Cancer Academy by influencing the system to ensure all health and care staff have protected time for education and training	Since the launch of the strategy, uptake in cancer education has grown significantly, increasing from 342 to 5128 registered users, reflecting the impact of our targeted initiatives and system-wide collaboration. One of the year’s proudest achievements was winning the Collaboration Award at the Greater Manchester Health and Care Awards, a testament to the strength of our joint efforts and the collective commitment to fostering a culture of learning and development within the workforce. Looking ahead, we will continue to champion protected time for education through the ACCEND work (influencing job planning) and drive forward initiatives that support lifelong learning, ensuring every health and care professional has the opportunity to develop and enhance their skills to provide the best possible cancer care.
Utilise and expand Cancer Workforce Days to provide an opportunity to celebrate the workforce, promote joint identity, and ensure the workforce feel valued	<p>National Cancer CNS Day</p> <p>National Cancer CNS Day, initiated by the Cancer Alliance in collaboration with GM CNS’s, continues to grow each year, providing a platform to raise the profile of the role and attract future professionals. National Cancer CNS Day 2024 was a resounding success, generating 2,685 posts, 14,751 engagements, 3,814,947 reach, and 9,411,698 impressions. A social media toolkit was created as a lasting resource to support ongoing engagement with the event. The 2025 event focused on routes into CNS roles, with videos and case studies developed alongside the Alliance communications team to showcase the importance of this role.</p> <p>Cancer AHP Day</p> <p>Following the success of CNS National Day, Cancer AHPs in GM approached the Alliance to lead a celebratory campaign for National AHP Day. For more details, refer to the growing and developing pillar.</p> <p>Workforce Away Days</p> <p>In response to workforce feedback, 2 GM CNS Away Days were held in year one to improve connectivity and create space for individual development, health, and wellbeing, chaired by the NHS GM Chief Nurse. In 2024/25, these away days were expanded to include both CNS’s and AHP’s, with a focus on improving integration across professional groups. The agenda covered topics such as implementing ACCEND into clinical practice, utilising the ePortfolio, enhancing personalised care interventions, and Recognising and Responding to Compassion Fatigue. Across the four sessions 155 CNS’ and AHPs attended with representations from all GM Trusts with 97% of survey respondents saying they would recommend the event. 50% of respondents advised that learning about Compassion Fatigue will influence their practice/patient care.</p> <p>Additionally, a CSW event was organised for GM staff across sectors to celebrate the role and provide networking opportunities. In response to feedback, two Compassion Fatigue days were also delivered for CSWs in secondary care, focusing on the impact of stress and vicarious trauma from supporting cancer patients. Both CNS’s and CSW’s found these sessions highly valuable, with feedback such as, ‘Highly informative and well presented by great instructor’, ‘How to apply the information in to work and life was extremely helpful’ and ‘Made an uncomfortable topic amazingly comfortable’.</p> <p>Further workforce away days for CSW’s, CNS’s and AHP’s will continue in 2025/26.</p>

Workforce Wellbeing



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Promote existing health and wellbeing offers to the cancer workforce through a dedicated directory on the GM Cancer website e.g. the ICB wellbeing toolkit	With a wealth of existing offers across GM, a dedicated Alliance <u>webpage</u> was developed specifically for wellbeing offers to make these more accessible to the cancer workforce. The site has had 240 views and 676 clicks since its publication. New health and wellbeing offers are continuously promoted via this site e.g. the ICB Wellbeing Toolkit, GM Resilience Hub, GM Health Hub and good employment best practice and support. The ICB led a piece of work in-house to understand the impact of resources across all workforce groups and therefore there was no need to repeat this process specifically for the cancer workforce.
Share good practice across the system and identify any gaps for specific professional groups	
Work with the ICB People and Culture Function to measure the uptake and impact of current wellbeing offers specifically within the cancer workforce	
Promote flexible working resources / toolkits to support sustainability and work life balance	

Addressing Inequalities



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Work with the GM VWIS Team to understand current workforce race equality data as part of the workforce data pilot	System wide cancer CNS and CSW workforce data dashboards have been developed in collaboration with providers which represents total numbers, retention data and a demographic breakdown for each provider Trust, along with locality level census data for relative comparison. This data helps to provide insight into existing workforce inequalities to help inform future initiatives and demonstrate impact. The dashboard can be viewed via the link here - Cancer Workforce GM ADSP
Pilot race equality interventions to increase representation of the cancer workforce to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•ensure the workforce is representative of the community that it serves•promote the good employment charter interventions supported by the ICB•inform future recruitment practices	<p>In partnership with Lead Cancer Nurses at Stockport and Tameside, the Aspirant CNS International Nurse Development Project piloted a new learning environment and educational offer specifically for international nurses, aligned with the ACCEND framework. The initiative aimed to provide insight into the Cancer CNS role, support future career progression, and diversify the cancer workforce. In response to disparities revealed by WRES data, which highlighted challenges for non-white staff in accessing training and senior positions, the project offered ten international nurses from diverse backgrounds a unique opportunity. WRES data showed that at Tameside, white staff had a 46% likelihood of accessing non-mandatory training and CPD, compared to just 33% for non-white staff. Across both Trusts, white staff were also more likely to be appointed from shortlisting (35% at Tameside and 38% at Stockport), while non-white staff faced significantly lower chances (14% at Tameside and 18% at Stockport).</p> <p>The programme consisted of a nine-day rotation across a range of services and activities, including observing key duties and responsibilities of the CNS, gaining first hand experience in compassionate breaking of bad news, and collaborating with site-specific teams. This experience offered insights into the multifaceted role of a CNS, boosting knowledge and confidence in cancer care. The project championed equality and cultural competence. International nurses shared how their diverse perspectives could enrich patient care, contributing to culturally sensitive and inclusive practices, while mentors noted a broadened understanding of cultural nuances and inequalities faced by diverse patient groups.</p> <p>By aligning with ACCEND, the project provided structured pathways for development, ensuring its sustainability and scalability. Critically, the initiative has inspired career progression, with all participants actively considering CNS roles. One nurse has already secured a 12-month CNS development position, demonstrating the tangible impact of the programme. Feedback from both participants and mentors has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the project’s success in driving diversity and fostering career development. Full evaluation will be available in April.</p>
Work with pathway boards to ensure diverse and inclusive representation from the different professional groups	AHP colleagues highlighted the lack of inequity across the Pathway board membership and lack of AHP representation. Membership was reviewed and proposed AHP professions recommended for each Pathway board supported by national guidance. As a result of this work a Consultant Prostate Brachytherapy Radiographer joined membership of the Urology Pathway Board and a Sonographer has joined the gynaecology pathway board. A survey was conducted with existing AHP members to understand their experience and areas for improvement. A report is now being completed with recommendations for pathway boards and Chief AHPs.
Work in collaboration with key partners and the GM Cancer Early Diagnosis programme to promote and encourage the cancer workforce to live well and engage with health promotion campaigns / programmes, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make Smoking History• making Every Contact Count (MECC) for Menopause• cancer Screening Campaigns	<p>Greater Manchester Cancer Alliance proudly pledged their support for the Answer Cancer ‘Bee Seen. Get Screened!’ campaign in 2023, leading the way for healthcare providers to follow suit. This promotes protected time for the cancer workforce to access their cancer screenings and for line managers and HR colleagues to confidently support staff health and wellbeing. Since the Alliance made its pledge, NHS GM and all secondary care organisations across Greater Manchester have followed suit, advocating for increased cancer screening uptake. Additionally, non-NHS organisations, including local Universities and Local Authorities, have also joined the pledge, with the possibility of other organisations participating as well.</p> <p>Other live well initiatives were brought together at an Addressing Inequalities themed Workforce & Education Programme Board in January 2024 attended by board members and system wide stakeholders. Following this a resource pack was developed and disseminated to the cancer workforce which included health and wellbeing offers, stop smoking support, and GM addressing inequalities initiatives to raise awareness of the support available across GM (view the resource pack here).</p>

Addressing Inequalities



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Support and expand the ConnectEDcare Project to ensure equitable access to EDI training	<p>The ConnectEDcare project was adopted by The Christie for internal staff and so to ensure EDI was at the forefront of all alliance educational offers, a dedicated EDI Educator was recruited within the workforce and education team. This has significantly enhanced our ability to scope, support, and deliver inequalities training through various methods and strengthened our commitment to ensuring equitable access to education and workforce development. With the development of EDI guidelines, we have supported Pathway Board Managers and other colleagues across the Alliance responsible for developing education to consider health inequalities from the outset.</p> <p>Cheshire and Merseyside launched their 123 Approach to Health Inequalities training, which our EDI Educator has been trained in to deliver locally. Both training sessions were fully booked (40 learners). The sessions were well received, with feedback being taken into consideration to inform longer-term sustainability as well as how this can be tailored for different care settings. A full evaluation will be available on the Cancer Academy Health Inequalities webpage.</p>
Work in collaboration with the Cancer Academy to develop a training package, 'Understanding and Supporting the role of the Carer', to enable staff to support carers and their wellbeing	<p>The Cancer Academy website now features a dedicated patient and carer education section, which includes several resources designed to empower and support patients, carers, and the wider workforce. A key offering is a comprehensive induction package for new patient and carer representatives joining the Cancer Alliance. This package helps them navigate the Alliance's structure and understand the value of participating in the patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) programme. To date, 25 individuals have accessed this resource, gaining vital insights into their roles.</p> <p>In parallel, a staff-focused version was developed to ensure that healthcare professionals have the relevant knowledge and confidence to effectively engage with Patient and Carer Representatives, and the wider voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. This was driven by one of our carer representatives, who is also a core member of the GM Cancer Workforce and Education Board, and has already engaged 80 members of the workforce with it being a requirement for all Cancer Alliance staff to have completed the content.</p>
In collaboration with the LGBT Foundation develop a training module to enable the cancer workforce to have mutually empowering conversations with patients and ask inclusive questions	<p>In collaboration with the LGBT Foundation, eLearning was created for the workforce to support empowering conversations and inclusive terminology. Although originally developed based on needs identified at the CSW forum, the learning has been widely accessed by over 200 members of the workforce. This initiative addresses the clear need for improved communication, especially in conversations with LGBTQ+ patients and provides the workforce with the skills to engage in sensitive, inclusive discussions. The training module is digital, free at the point of access, and CPD-accredited, ensuring its sustainability and enhancing accessibility by overcoming geographical and learning preference barriers. Prior to the training, only 24% of delegates felt confident in handling such conversations, but post-training, this increased to 76%, reflecting a significant improvement in both confidence and competence. Due to the success of the content, the initiative was extended to support to patient and carer representatives, offering a tailored module to help them feel more empowered when discussing their care with clinicians.</p> <p>The modules have been recognised nationally, earning a place on the HSJ Awards shortlist. LGBTQ+ Inclusive Communication – Greater Manchester Cancer Academy.</p>
Signpost and promote ICP recruitment guides to cancer workforce recruitment colleagues to ensure fair and equitable chances of success, and exploration of alternative entry routes to attract diverse talent	<p>Continuous promotion of the ICP Recruitment and Retention Toolkit to support those responsible for implementing or improving recruitment processes and/or the overall experience of the workforce and retaining their staff.</p> <p>To complement the comprehensive toolkit we created an Inclusive Recruitment Best Practice guide to provide practical tips for attracting and selecting a diverse range of candidates, including strategies for outreach, engagement and recruitment best practice. This was shared with our networks and influenced the alliance internal recruitment processes.</p>
Promote inclusive recruitment practices utilising learning from previous projects outside of cancer	

Growing and Developing

Attracting the future workforce



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Work with other professional groups to support promotional campaigns to raise the profile of careers in cancer	With 15 different roles comprising AHP professionals, the team collaborated with AHPs to raise awareness of their vital work in cancer care and highlight the wide range of roles available, inspiring the future workforce. To mark National AHP Day on 14 October 2024, the Alliance brought together the cancer AHP community for the first time, celebrating their invaluable contributions to supporting people affected by cancer. Activities included a dedicated webpage to house a communications toolkit for a social media campaign, a video and podcast promoting the roles of AHPs working in cancer care, information regarding each of the AHP roles and a webinar covering the four pillars of practice; research, education, leadership, and clinical. The webinar saw over 140 delegates tune in with 95% of survey respondents saying they would recommend the webinar to colleagues. The working group has evolved into a GM Cancer AHP CoP.
Make links with GM Access and Step ahead programmes to promote future careers in cancer	To support the attraction of individuals into cancer care, the team developed role profiles for positions in cancer services, including CSWs and AHPs, to be added to GM Access , a platform that provides information on job vacancies, learning opportunities, and career development within Greater Manchester. These can be viewed here
<p>Link in with education providers (Higher Education Institutes, Colleges, and Schools) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">raise the profile of a career in cancerbuilding on the digital clinical placement expansion programme, establish cancer placement pathways for student nurses and AHPs, as part of the Targeted Practice Education Programmeinfluence curriculum development	<p>Raise the profile of a career in cancer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exhibited at 9 careers events across Primary and Secondary schools, Universities and Museum of Science and Industry.Due to resources required for career events, the approach has changed to focus on a more sustainable solution and to do this in collaboration with other GM system groups. The team has established a working group to create lesson plans for schools supported by a centralised digital platform that provides students with an interactive, and immersive experience exploring the various roles across health and care, the necessary skills, and how these align with their academic and education pursuits. This will continue into 2025/26 in collaboration with teachers, curriculum leads and learners. <p>TPEP</p> <p>Building on the Digital Clinical Placement Programme, the Alliance led a project as part of the larger Targeted Practice Education Programme (TPEP) led by the GM Programme Management Office for nursing, midwifery and AHPs exploring the development, expansion, and sustainability of practice learning. Following a successful ICB bid, funding was secured for two Practice Educator blended roles to support the pilot localities of Bolton and Stockport to implement the ACCEND framework with the current nursing and AHP workforce whilst also expanding existing cancer learning environments for the pre-registered workforce. The practice educator at Bolton supported a successful pilot of a cancer placement within the Cancer CNS teams that has expanded cancer-focused placements to support an additional 78 learners per year. The practice educator at Stockport also developed cancer focused placement spokes that can support up to 18 additional learners a year. The final evaluation of the TPEP/implementing ACCEND project is available to view here.</p> <p>Influencing Curriculum</p> <p>A new partnership has been forged with Manchester Metropolitan University to influence nursing curricula at the pre-registration level. This initiative integrates cancer education into the curriculum while also promoting ePortfolio adoption, equipping the future workforce with the essential skills and tools needed to make a meaningful impact in their profession.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Interactive Simulation for Students: As part of addressing health inequalities and fostering early conversations around cancer diagnosis, 85 students participated in a three-hour interactive simulation. Set in a community 'flat' environment, the session revolves around a trans-male patient who self-discharged due to poor treatment for abnormal menstrual bleeding. Students, acting as district and community nurses, engage in scenarios related to women's health, including patient education on smear tests, HPV, and cervical cancer, while encouraging inclusive thinking on cancer pathways. A full evaluation will be available on the Academy website at end of the academic year.'Birley Place' Virtual Resource: Launched in September 2023, this open-access virtual platform features a community of digital characters and scenarios. It has engaged 397 learners (270 BSc Hons, 127 MSc), primarily used as a preparatory tool before procedural simulated practice learning (SPL) on catheterisation. The resource has significantly enhanced learners' understanding of catheter care in practice, with positive feedback highlighting its interactivity, real-world application, and engaging scenarios. The positive response from learners has led to a strong desire for more resources to support future procedural simulations.Expansion Plans: A three-year plan has been developed to create additional cancer-related scenarios that can be shared across Greater Manchester universities, further extending the reach and impact of cancer education.

Growing and Developing

Attracting the future workforce



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Pilot pathways for cancer volunteers / carers interested in a career in cancer, supported by a training package	A collaborative bid was developed with the Rochdale locality and Action Together, however, this was unsuccessful. We conducted a brief survey to gauge appetite for a career pathway with the GM Cancer Voices community and the response was low, therefore we changed our focus to providing education for patients and carer representatives. For more information on work we are doing to support carers, see additional info on retaining the current workforce .
Promote using the ACCEND framework to support the development of generalists who have an interest in a career in cancer	The GM Aspiring CNS Programme supported 5 generalist nurses with an interest in careers in cancer to partake in a 12-month programme consisting of rotational placements and bespoke training package. The programme acted as a springboard for cancer nursing career development and has proven to provide benefits to individuals and organisations with 3 out of the 5 participants successfully securing CNS roles. The evaluation summary infographic can be found here . The Aspiring CNS programme led to the initiation of an International Nurse Project, described in the Addressing Inequalities section of this report. Aspiring programmes have now been aligned to ACCEND and have been proven to be successful in growing your own workforce. We will continue to promote these programmes and work with providers to expand and develop pathways for the generalist workforce to gain exposure to cancer services within their organisation.
Evaluate and expand the Aspiring CNS programme to attract general nurses into a career in cancer and link outcomes to the ACCEND programme	
Explore the development of additional 'Aspiring' Cancer Clinical pathways	
Optimise use of the apprenticeship levy to support routes into the cancer workforce	Over the past year, we have explored the potential for apprenticeships within the supportive and assistive workforce, conducting focus groups and gathering insights to assess interest and identify needs. Our findings reveal a strong demand for professional development opportunities in this group, and we are committed to supporting this moving forward, whether through clinical or non-clinical pathways. We remain engaged with regional and national groups leading initiatives in this area. However, until there is clearer national and regional direction on apprenticeships, we will continue to develop educational offerings through the Cancer Academy, responding to workforce needs. Our focus will be on creating a clear education framework aligned with ACCEND for all levels of practice.
Explore the use of the digital placement model and digital staff passport to expand post registration placement opportunities across GM	<p>The digital placement model was developed and led by The Christie. The alliance has supported the expansion of this for mammography apprenticeships which continued in 24/25. Current discussions are exploring how this model can expand beyond the mammography workforce for other diagnostic professions. The placement was also made available for all pre-registration learners who were assigned to cancer placements at Bolton and Stockport (TPEP) and for the international nurses on the pilot. This digital placement is now available for pre-registration nurses from all GM Universities.</p> <p>See workforce integration section regarding an update on the National digital staff passport</p>

Growing and Developing

Attracting the future workforce



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Promote using the ACCEND framework to inform / standardise job descriptions for the non-medical workforce	Standardised job descriptions aligned to ACCEND have been developed in collaboration with Lead Cancer Nurses for CNS and CCC roles and centralised on the NHS Futures Platform. Standardised versions of the MDT Coordinator and Cancer Navigator roles will be developed in 25/26.
Promote and coordinate the ACCEND training programmes to upskill aspiring cancer support workers / nurses / AHPs to support future recruitment	<p>Continuous promotion of the ACCEND Hub remains a priority. The team remain core members of the National ACCEND Steering group and lead the hub development for the registered to enhanced workforce.</p> <p>Moving into 25/26, a standardised training package, LEAP (Learn, Empower, Advocate, Provide), will be developed specifically for support workers. This programme will be aligned with both ACCEND and the National Principles of Cancer Care Programme (PCCP). As the PCCP course has limited places due to its national scope, LEAP will help address the inequity in access to education for GM support workers, ensuring more individuals can benefit from valuable learning opportunities.</p>
Targeted project to scope and promote the role of the Advanced Clinical Practitioner in cancer	<p>A dedicated ACP was recruited to lead this work which has resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portfolio of examples of trainee and qualified Advanced Practitioners (APs) working across the cancer pathway to demonstrate the impact of this role.• Profession specific surveys developed and sent to stakeholders to scope current understanding of the AP role with the aim of increasing future opportunities for individuals and organisations to consider this level of practice within their future workforce development plans• Report of findings and recommendations will be published April 25.

Growing and Developing

Retaining the Cancer Workforce



ACTIVITY

OUTCOME

Support workforce digitisation including access to online education and development through the Cancer Academy	Over the past two years, the Greater Manchester Cancer Academy has made significant strides in developing a sustainable lifelong learning model for the non-medical workforce, addressing both current and future workforce to address the needs of the population. Since its launch in 2022, the Academy has experienced rapid growth and has established itself as a key resource in supporting professionals across all care settings, including those in generalist roles who require cancer knowledge. Given that one in two people will be affected by cancer in their lifetime, up to 50% of a professional's workload may involve cancer care.
Expand the GM Cancer Academy - the cancer education hub – to ensure it acts as a single point of access for all cancer education	At the start of 2023, the Cancer Academy received additional funding from the Workforce Collaborative, which enabled it to transition from its pilot phase to business as usual. This funding also supported the move towards a self-sustainable model under the backing of the Cancer Alliance. The Academy’s aim shifted from simply developing a learning model to inspiring, educating, and improving the health and social care workforce. Having moved beyond its pilot phase, the Academy entered ‘Phase 2’ – positioning itself as the Greater Manchester digital hub for cancer education. This phase enabled the Academy to provide a single access point for all learners across the GM cancer system, expanding from its initial Urology focus to 20 different site-specific academies.
Establish a Cancer Academy Faculty of subject matter experts to support the development and delivery of education	In order to realise its goal of becoming the central digital hub for cancer education, the Academy focused on three key areas: a) extending the model to other cancer specialties, b) catering to professionals across various sectors, and c) consolidating three workforce collaborative-funded cancer education projects to optimise Greater Manchester’s investment. A Cancer Academy faculty was established, collaborating with subject matter experts to identify key areas of work, including blended learning, ePortfolio development, and EDI education. As delivery evolved and in acknowledgment of the importance of reaching beyond the cancer workforce it led to the creation of the GM Health and Care Academies Network - comprising of other academies and providers in the GM education ecosystem. This aligns with the overarching goal of supporting the one workforce ambition, facilitating integrated education that spans across diverse disciplines. The network also strives to promote and champion each other's educational offerings, emphasizing the importance of collective influence in realising the lifelong learning ambition; one of the areas identified we can collaborate on in the future is communication skills training.
Ensure equity in access to genomics education for the cancer workforce via the cancer academy	Supporting the workforce in becoming digitally literate goes beyond mastering core skills—it involves embracing new technology as a tool for learning. Over the past two years, the Academy has explored and delivered communication skills training in a non-conventional way. In partnership with Recourse:AI, an innovative AI-driven experiential learning approach was developed, allowing learners to engage in real-time communication skills training with digital humans. This scalable and sustainable solution provides a flexible model that can easily be adapted to other disciplines. This approach has been successfully tested by over 100 professionals across various care settings . It was formally rolled out and later shortlisted for an HSJ Digital Award. An enhanced version is planned for 2025-2026, supported by a research project to ensure the training remains evidence-based. The initial evaluation can be viewed here .
Support the wider rollout of Prehab and rehab through the cancer academy	In the past 24 months, the Cancer Academy facilitated 23 CPD-accredited events , covering a broad range of topics, from pathway-specific sessions (e.g., colorectal, acute oncology) to core alliance programmes (e.g., genomics and Personalised Care’s Live Well events). The flagship Greater Manchester Cancer Conference was also part of these offerings. Since April 2023, 5,000 professionals across Greater Manchester engaged in our CPD offerings.
Create development packages for the nonclinical workforce e.g. Cancer Trackers, Cancer Managers etc	Development packages for the non-clinical workforce are in development, with packages of education comprising of Alliance and other quality assured national offers being compiled to meet workforce needs. LEAP into Cancer Care will be available for cancer care coordinators, navigators and MDT coordinators in 25/26, with variations being created for non-clinical staff in primary care too. A non-clinical framework to explore alternative career pathways is also being explored, which further supports the finding from our apprenticeship scoping. Headline stats from the 2 years of delivery can be found on the Exec Summary infographic .

Growing and Developing

Retaining the Cancer Workforce



ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
Support implementation of the ACCEND capability framework to promote retention through continuous professional development	<p>GM is leading the way nationally with regards to implementing ACCEND and has been invited to present at National Communities of Practice and sharing guidance with other Cancer Alliances. We have dedicated Cancer Education and Development leads working in partnership with providers to support the scale and spread of ACCEND. GM has taken a strategic approach by working with Senior Nursing and AHP leaders within Trusts to embed the framework into all existing processes – job descriptions, inductions, appraisals, job plans as well as providing practical implementation workshops. ACCEND mentors have been established across all providers who play the role of ACCEND advocates to guide teams within their organization on how to use the framework to support their continuous professional development.</p> <p>Significant achievements include developing the first digitised version of ACCEND on the ePortfolio, the creation of the <u>Line Managers Handbook</u> (which now sits on the National ACCEND futures platform to support other cancer alliances) and <u>Implementation Webinar</u>. With 900 active users across a quarter of all Cancer Alliances, the ePortfolio offers unparalleled data-driven insights into workforce engagement with ACCEND. Expansion plans include team skill mix and appraisal functionalities. This work will continue throughout 25/26.</p>
Building on the National Preceptorship and Legacy Mentoring programmes, pilot an approach to retaining the cancer workforce throughout their career trajectory	<p>The Cancer Education and Development lead roles described in the workforce integration section provide a different model for mid-late career nurses / AHP. It is a blended role encompassing elements of Legacy Mentors supporting staff with their development and providing mentoring. Additionally, we have been piloting the ACCEND Mentor role and Practice Educators to help provide different models for providers to consider to support retention of their experienced staff. This is aligned to the long-term workforce plan and promotes portfolio careers.</p> <p>We have continued to support the GM Practice Education Centre for Excellence, taking on the role of co-chair to help drive its direction and impact. Through this position, we have contributed to shape discussions and initiatives, with a particular focus on integrating the cancer perspective into pre-registration learning. We have supported various learner led events & roadshows to showcase the variety of learning opportunities and environments available, particularly within cancer pathways & services. We are committed to influencing and enhancing education and aim to utilise the GM PECE network to support the collaboration with HEIs, ensuring that future healthcare professionals are better equipped to support cancer care.</p>
Build links with the GM Practice Educator Centre for Excellence (PECE) to support the expansion of Practice Educators in cancer to ensure equitable access to training and education to improve standardisation of practice	
In alignment with ACCEND, support the implementation of the National Acute Oncology competency passports to upskill all relevant workforce groups working across primary and secondary care	<p>The Acute Oncology Competence Assessment Passports are a suite of multi-disciplinary, standardised competence assessment documents for staff working at all levels of practice supporting patients who have oncological emergencies. They are designed to help staff provide safe care to people with cancer emergencies, spot the signs that something might be wrong and to provide or refer patients to the appropriate care/services. The Passports were developed in collaboration with a National Stakeholder Group and were officially launched at the UKONS fringe session at the UK Oncology Forum in Brighton in June 2024. Find out more and access all education content by clicking the link @AcuteOncologyPassports Linktree. A full post launch data collection will be completed via UKONS which the team will keep linked in with.</p>
Conduct a needs analysis to understand training needs of our senior leaders and future leaders	<p>Working with an external provider, the team supported the development of a workshop at a Cancer Leads Forum with senior and future leaders within the Cancer Alliance. This workshop provided valuable insights into key areas for leadership development. In response, 2 educational sessions were delivered at our Cancer Forums, focusing on essential leadership skills such as change management, team motivation, dynamics, and project evaluation. These sessions equipped leaders with the tools needed to navigate complex system roles effectively. These education sessions have become a standard item once a year as part of the Cancer Forum series, displaying the emphasis the Alliance is putting on supporting the education of our leaders.</p>
Explore a leadership development package to support Pathway Board members in their system role	

Growing and Developing

Retaining the Cancer Workforce



ACTIVITY

OUTCOME

Work with pathway boards to pilot an approach to defining safe caseloads for the CNS’ workforce including a review of current skill mix models, to inform workforce modelling	Defining safe caseloads for CNS’s is extremely difficult due to the nature of the role and the varying skill mix within teams. We engaged with national colleagues and upon their advice changed our approach focusing on reviewing skill mix models instead. The colorectal pathway was chosen as the pilot site to trial an approach. This involved working closely with colorectal CNS teams across GM to understand their workforce model, what is working well, and where they feel there is opportunity for improvement. Initial findings were presented to the Colorectal CNS Forum in November 24 which provided an opportunity to share best practice and discuss areas of focus. The challenges raised will be addressed through the continued implementation of the ACCEND framework in 25/26 which will help to ensure the right people, have the right skills, in the right place at the right time.
Support the delivery and sustainability of the Allies in Cancer Care AHP Cancer Training Programme and link this to the ACCEND Programme	‘Allies in Cancer Care’ was developed and led by The University of Salford, however uptake was low and funding did not continue. An alternative approach has been to recruit an AHP fellow as part of the Primary Care Cancer Fellowship programme to engage with AHPs in primary care and the community to identify training needs. However, appetite for this role was also low, which could reflect the limited number of AHPs in Primary Care, lack of awareness of the alliance, and insufficient capacity to release AHPs for portfolio career development. Moving forward, we will continue to promote the AHP community of practice to AHPs in Primary Care and the community, as well as promote relevant educational opportunities through the Primary Care Workforce Steering Group and GM Training Hub, and remain response to workforce need.
Align with the GM Retention Framework and support planned activity led by the ICP	The GM retention framework has evolved as has the governance surrounding this. The programme has been rebranded under the People Promise and the Workforce and Education team remain key stakeholders in the GM and NW groups leading this work.
Collaborate with the GM NHS Integrated Care Virtual Workforce Information System (VWIS) team to collate system wide cancer workforce data, including retention data, surgical audit, and Medical & Clinical Oncology workforce review	<p>Dashboards live, for more information see Addressing Inequalities Pillar.</p> <p>The upper GI Surgical audit was absorbed by the SQD workstream. The Medical & Clinical Oncology workforce review was stood down due to work planned at The Christie. There have been developments in oncology linked to the breast pathway, led by the breast pathway board.</p>
Conduct a gap analysis for research nurses to understand recruitment and retention issues, overlaid with research offer and patient uptake	<p>A gap analysis was conducted to understand the interplay of factors affecting research nurse recruitment and retention, the research offer, and patient uptake in Greater Manchester. The initial focus was a workforce data gathering exercise from each organisation within GM. The data gathered included job title, banding, WTE, vacancy rate, length of time in post and demographics data where available, in addition to exploring recruitment and retention challenges. Patient uptake was analysed for one tumour group to understand any differences across localities and organisations within GM comparing staffing numbers against patient numbers.</p> <p>This data will now become baseline data for the BRIDGE project commencing in 25/26 – where education on research will be piloted with certain tumour sites (TBC) and reviewed to see if it has supported trial uptake with underrepresented populations. Additional information on this project can be found on the Cancer Academy.</p>

Cross Cutting Workstreams



ACTIVITY

OUTCOME

<p>In line with organisation’s social responsibility commitment, promote the importance of protected time within job plans for all to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• complete training and education as part of their continuous professional development• enable learning and practice across the four pillars of practice in line with the ACCEND framework	<p>Job planning is organisationally-led however, through the ACCEND work the team has and will continue to advocate for job plans for all aligned to ACCEND and the four pillars of practice. All providers in GM are currently looking at this.</p>
<p>Reduce inequity in access to level 3 Psycho-Oncology supervision</p>	<p>The Workforce and Education Programme collaborated with the Personalised Care Programme to review the provision of supervision for Psychological Level 2 services across Greater Manchester, aiming to understand who is accessing and delivering supervision, as well as identifying any inequities in access. A survey was conducted, receiving responses from approximately 37% of the CNS workforce across all Trusts in GM. These responses informed focus groups held at GM CNS Forums and with Lead Cancer Nurses. A findings report was produced, detailing the supervision model at each Trust, barriers to access, and key recommendations. These findings are being taken forward via the Think Cancer project.</p> <p>In parallel, the team were involved in shaping NHS England's recommendations for Level 2 training, which included guidance on the competencies required for delivering training and supervision. Looking ahead to 25/26, the personalised care team will work to assess access to Level 3 and 4 supervisors across GM, potentially expanding beyond cancer services to create a two-way model. The aim is to integrate supervision into the Academy’s training offerings, ensuring it's not overlooked. A task-and-finish group has been set up to use the ePortfolio system to track supervision access and analyse capacity versus demand.</p>

Moving Forward

In preparation for the People and Culture strategy refresh planned for 2025, we conducted a workforce engagement exercise towards the end of 2024 to help shape its development and guide the future direction of the Workforce and Education programme. This included:

- a survey for the cancer workforce to identify priority areas, which received 217 responders (all trusts, all professional groups) and
- profession-specific focus groups to delve deeper into the top priorities and to explore potential solutions.

The top priority areas identified were:

- 1) Not enough staff (themes: burnout / sickness, vacancies, growth in demand, reliance on agency)
- 2) Lack of strategic workforce planning (themes: not involving staff, reactive not proactive, lack of job planning)
- 3) Limited time to access education to improve practice/ stay up to date
- 4) Lack of opportunities for career progression

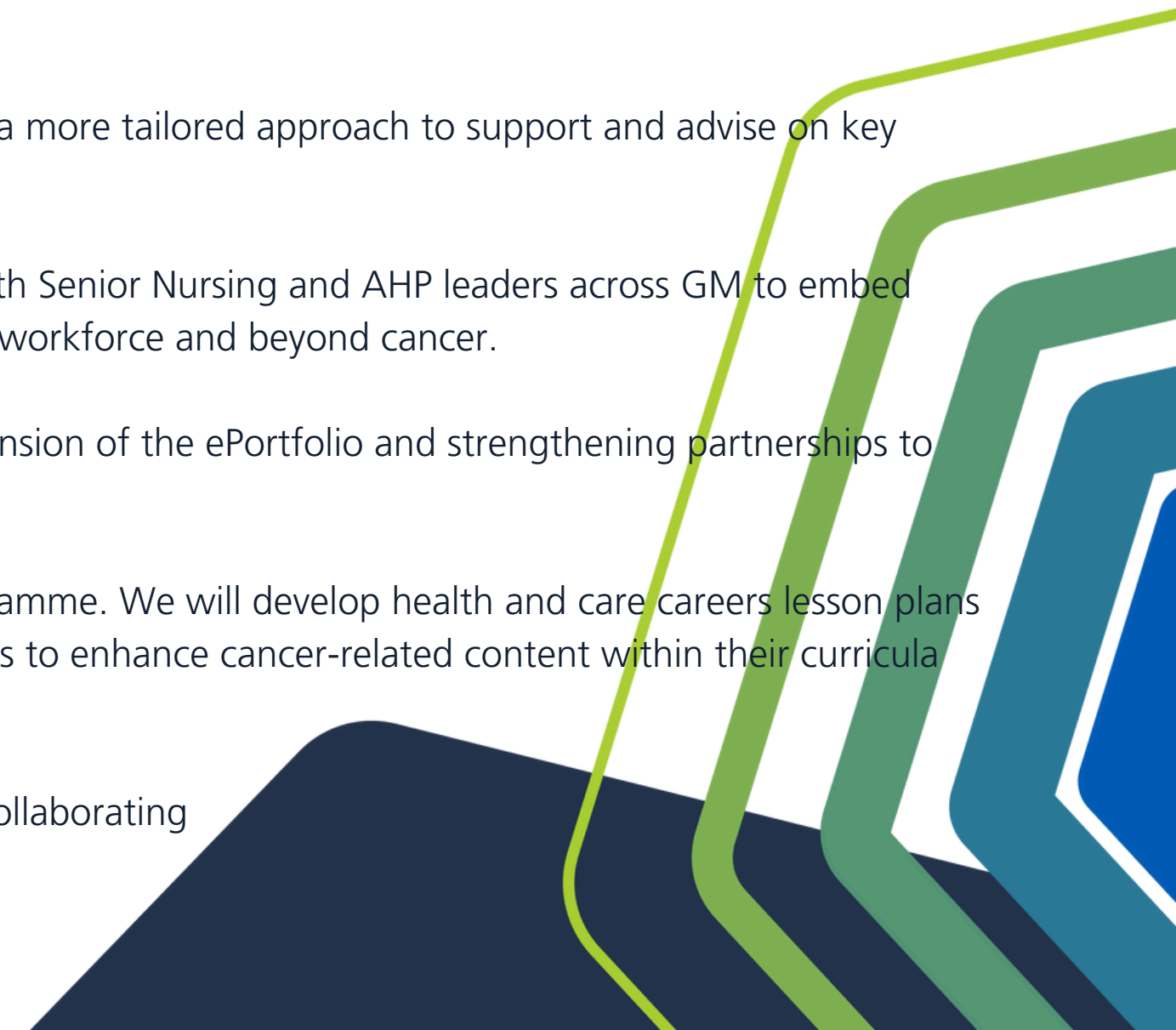
To tackle these priorities, we will refine our approach and collaborate with Cancer Triumvirates at each provider, enabling a more tailored approach to support and advise on key workforce challenges including workforce planning.

ACCEND remains a national priority, with implementation continuing to be a key focus in 2025/26. We will collaborate with Senior Nursing and AHP leaders across GM to embed ACCEND as business as usual for the specialist workforce and to develop plans for its broader rollout across the generalist workforce and beyond cancer.

We will remain committed to supporting the growth and development of the health and care workforce through the expansion of the ePortfolio and strengthening partnerships to deliver cutting edge educational offerings via our Cancer Academy.

We will continue to strengthen the future talent pipeline by supporting all providers in delivering an Aspiring Cancer Programme. We will develop health and care careers lesson plans for schools, equipping teachers with the resources to effectively deliver them, and continue to foster relationships with HEIs to enhance cancer-related content within their curricula and expand cancer learning environments.

Most importantly, we will keep our workforce at the forefront by continuing to strengthen GM workforce networks and collaborating with system partners to ensure we remain responsive to evolving workforce needs.



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